

Night's Death Mask

Schubert's head was small as a grapefruit.
Beethoven's, caught too young for a scowl,
Rested like a fish under its glass dome.
The library light filtered through the fingers
Of Wagner's glove, aging from yellow
To gray in miniscule refractions.

Outside the yellow window,
Night-cast shadows patterned the street.
A shabby man, standing marvelously erect
On his long legs, smashed a window
To seize an armload of suits
And was sucked into the blackness
Of a side street, glass still falling.

Above, I watched the spidered glass --
Passers by, policemen,
Rising like goldfish to feed
Through the hole in the night.
Turning, I passed the living remnants
Of dead men, sealed against dust.
Bubbles of glare swam between the bronze
And the glass, lingering a moment
After I snapped off the light.

On The Behavior Of Castrated Lizards Journal Of Genetic Psychology, 1936 (to those involved)

You seem not
To need a kingdom,
Those of you I know,
Shy, short tempered,
Rock hermits.
I have never seen you
Making love,
Nor,
(To my knowledge)
Have you seen me --